



TOOL BOX

There was no logical explanation to why Cal and Linda Sampson didn't kill anyone the afternoon of April 15th, last month, or crash into on-coming traffic. "I could do nothing... I was helpless as a child," Cal said. Like a screw stripped of its rivets, there was nothing to keep them on the road. The off-duty Delran Police Officer, that was in the car behind them, saw the whole thing. Even

he was memorized by this unimaginable accident. Seconds before, the Sampson's car was air-borne on Route 55, north, heading to Vineland. Like a broken blade from an electric saw, they were spinning out of control. Between the horizontal rain fall and the pushing winds, came the crash of "breaking glass and crunching metal," they tell me. "We had spun around...three times we did a one-eighty...we were literally lifted off the road!"

Linda yelled, "Oh My God!" and Cal recalls thinking, "that's my girl!" as they tumble and flip. Their car went backwards, into a slow motion stop, cushioned by the muddy shoulder of the highway, and down on its driver side. As they dangle from their seats, Cal looks back over his shoulder, in that awkward position, to see his wife. "We're going to be okay," they assured each other. "Within seconds, people were leaning over, at the now vertical windshield, asking if we were okay," Cal continued. "A week prior, two people had died in the same area from a similar accident...We had maybe a bruise, but we were not even scratched," he said.

Though the rest of that day was a blur, Cal remembers thinking, "We have to fix this!" He wanted to fix the car. He wanted the swirling emotions and adrenaline of all the "what if's" to be fixed. After all, the purpose of that day was to help fix the taxes at the political rally "tax-tea-party" they were supposed to attend. The Lord, however, wanted to fix a heart that day. There was something inside Cal, needing repair, that was as stubborn as a rusty nail stuck in a wooden plank. Cal was an atheist and he said he could have told me "one hundred and fifty things why (he) didn't believe in Jesus."

When the car flipped, all the loose stuff fell on Cal. He remembers the hammer that wacked him in the head. In reflection, he was brought back to age 18. He says his dad "was an incredibly talented man...who worked with his hands to provide for his family." His dad told him, back then, "Son, I have given you the tools you need in life; it's up to you what you do with them." His dad had given him tools to guide him through life, using metal and wood. The hammer in God's hand, though, "was made of grace and love" Cal tells me. Now Jesus, the Carpenter, was using His tools to guide and fix Cal's heart. As fast as their car was spinning, so was their walk with Jesus speeding up.

Cal said, "God had opened His door, and up to this point I had merely just poked my head in and looked around...", but after this accident, "things had changed." Within the span of a few seconds, Cal saw his life differently. "How blessed I was, how blessed we were...I saw God's power and love for me," he said. And now he knows the best part of being changed by God's tools, he says, "I once was lost, but now I'm found. (Lord) You've saved a wretch like me." Cal continues, "Jesus gives us tools we need, right here...it's up to me how I use them...I had my 'hammer moment' that day, I pray I don't need another one."

Like a mallet in God's hands, Jeremiah strikes the mark, "Am I a God near at hand, says the Lord, and not a God far off? Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him?, says the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth?...Is not My word like a fire? And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?...For I will set My eyes on (My people) for good...Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart." (Jer. 23:23, 24, 29; 24:6, 7) "...a hammer is but an instrument and a passive one, it can do nothing of itself; it must be taken up and used by a powerful hand, or it can do nothing; what is a hammer without a hand?" said theologian John Gill. The acknowledgement of Jesus is the same; it has no effect unless it strikes the heart. Yet when the pardon, the righteousness, and the salvation by Christ, "is taken up into God's own hands," Gill continues, "and strikes with it, it will break the hardest heart in pieces, and make a stony heart a heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 11:19)

Cal and Linda indeed praise the Lord for all He did to save them last month, and for using His tools in Cal's life. "Jesus is still handing people the tool kit...well, for me, a hammer," Cal finishes, "...and it's all about faith and belief...and now it's personal!"



Living Stones Ministry of Lighthouse Church... This is the place to memorialize your testimonies to what God has done (Joshua 4) May He receive the glory due His name! Please contact Robin Hetherington for an interview and she will write your story, so that others may know God is still at work in the lives of His people. Email Robin : rahbirchbay@comcast.net or call: 609.889.0063